

## **Hawkins Exclusion Zone** by **darthstormer**

**Category:** Stranger Things, 2016

**Genre:** Drama

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Eleven/Jane H., Mike W., OC

**Status:** Completed

**Published:** 2019-04-01 22:44:32

**Updated:** 2019-04-01 22:44:32

**Packaged:** 2019-12-12 20:33:03

**Rating:** K+

**Chapters:** 1

**Words:** 2,041

**Publisher:** [www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net)

**Summary:** A one-shot look at a possible future for Hawkins.

## **Hawkins Exclusion Zone**

They say manning the perimeter of the Hawkins Exclusion Zone is the cushiest gig in the Army, and in many ways, it probably is. The rotations are short - two days on site, three back at base - and the workload is light. Watch the cameras, drive the perimeter, check the monitoring equipment, repeat. The job also takes an extreme attention to detail, the ability to perform the repetitive tasks for months on end without losing focus or getting sloppy, and above all, a willingness to carry out assigned duties without asking too many questions.

This is how it was all explained to me when I was recommended for the assignment, straight out of basic training. I hadn't gone into the service with any particular destination in mind, and the job sounded far safer than being sent overseas. And, I'll admit, I was sucked in by the idea of guarding one of the nation's more secretive locations.

As I understand it, the site was a thriving town in the middle of Indiana until the early 1990s, when the town was emptied almost overnight. Within six months, the exclusion-zone was established, sealing off the site from all public entry. The zone is roughly square, 12 miles to a side and centered just to the East of the original town center. Every foot of the outer perimeter is surrounded by 15 feet of cyclone fencing topped with looped razor wire. A second fence, constructed just the same, is set a half-mile inside the first. A permanent no-fly zone is established over the site up to 20,000 feet and extending an additional 10 miles in each direction. Suffice it to say, no one outside a select few allowed in, have any idea what remains of the town.

One of the many unusual features of the site is the perimeter road. The dirt track, established for personnel to patrol, is set to the outside of the fence, rather than within, like every other military installation. Even the guards tasked with patrolling aren't allowed inside, except under special circumstances. After being here for almost four years, I've only been through the outer gate three times, and the inner only once. That access had been reluctantly granted after another security officer fell asleep at his monitors and missed a pair of curious teens

make their way under the outer fence. I was the one who spotted them about the make it through the inner fence, when they strayed into my monitoring zone. I called it in, per protocol, and was sent in to retrieve them.

The wayward youths were detained for several days, until enough fear of punishment had been put in their minds. As for the officer let them slip passed in the first place, he was immediately relieved of duty. Site security is often a one-strike and you're out situation, and the last I heard, he was mopping floors at a satellite monitoring facility far North of the Arctic circle.

My job is pretty simple, and comes down to three responsibilities. One, watch the cameras for anyone trying to get through the fence. Curiosity runs strong and we get a handful of people every year who try it. They are typically picked up long before they reach the fence itself. If someone manages to get through the outer barrier, we are buzzed through by the off-site gate controllers to go in and get them. There is usually a stern debriefing for letting someone get that far, but as long as the second fence isn't breached, officers will typically keep their assignment unless there was extreme neglect.

The second responsibility is to drive the perimeter road, watching for people trying to slip past the cameras and any damage to the fence from downed trees. Repair crews are usually on location within a few hours when we call in a damage report.

The last and most important task, as is drilled into our heads on a weekly basis, is equipment monitoring. In each of the four security stations around the outer rim, there is the green-room, as we have come to nickname them. Three large panels are filled with indicator lights, denoted by a simple numeric identifier. The exact equipment behind each light is known only to those off-site, who have an understanding of just what is being controlled in the middle of the zone. Our only job, in regards to the lights, is to make sure they are green. If one of them goes red, indicating an equipment problem, we call it in. Within an hour, a crew in hazmat suits arrives and is buzzed through both the outer and inner gates. After they call out that the equipment has been repaired, we confirm the indicator is green again, and they leave. Again, questions are strongly discouraged.

Above all, we are instructed to watch for anything suspicious. If we see anything that raises that little flag in the back of the mind, we call it in. It is made clear, during briefings, to call in anything at all that doesn't feel right. Those responsible for the zone would rather deal with 1000 false alarms, than miss a single instance of something important. Asking just what sort of suspicious things we're supposed to be watching for falls once more into the realm of things we don't need to know, just keep your eyes open.

Of course, my curious mind is determined to get me into trouble someday. In my off-duty hours I have looked a little into the history of the town, seeing if something in its past could give a clue to the present state of things. I'm sure my searches have been monitored, but so far nothing has come of it so I can only assume the truth is well buried. For the most part, Hawkins appears to have been a typical small town; quiet and idyllic. News stories tended to focus on farm festivals and PTA luncheons. The only real stories of note were from the fall of '83, when a boy who went missing, was thought dead and later found alive. A year later, the Department of Energy lab on the outskirts of town was shut down. As it turns out, a girl also went missing in the fall of '83, but was presumed a runaway. Only after an investigative journalist from Chicago dug into the disappearance, did the lab come clean and confess that the girl had died due to a chemical leak. After that, the town appeared to return to quiet normalcy until 1991 when the town was suddenly and permanently evacuated. The official story was that the leak in '83 had spread further than original thought and the town was severely contaminated.

Everyone was ordered out and given full governmental assistance in the relocation; far more than is typically seen in such situations. Claims were accepted from the residents for any and all losses and payments were rubber-stamped in record time. A few lawsuits were filed by those who didn't accept the cover-story, but nothing much came of those. The last bit of news from the town itself, was the story of the Chief of Police, Jim Hopper, who was remaining behind to oversee the security of the area until the perimeter fences and monitors were in place. He would be staying in town, along with his daughter Jane, and a single deputy, one Michael Wheeler. I never could dig up any information on where the three of them wound up

after the fences were completed.

That was nearly forty years ago now, and since then everything has been quiet and routine in the Exclusion Zone. Until today, that is. I had just finished a drive along the perimeter, and returned to the security station to perform an hourly check of the green-room. An indicator in the middle of one panel was glowing a bright red. I grabbed the radio handset from the wall and called it in.

"This is station four. I have a red indicator," I began.

"Roger station four," a voice crackled from the speaker. "Identify the light."

"Panel A. Unit 174"

"Thank you station four. Dispatching a team," came the reply.

I was just about to hang the radio back up when another green light blinked out and came back on red.

"Station four again," I started, "I just had another light go red. Panel A. Unit 253."

As I waited for a reply, more lights began to switch, one after another.

"Station four, we have a problem here. I've got seven lights out...wait, make that nine."

I felt a slight tremor through my feet, and suddenly the room was bathed in red as nearly every indicator switched over. That's when the sirens began, one long, slowly rising note echoing through the woods and penetrating the concrete walls of the security station. In my mind, I flashed back to my initial training upon receiving this assignment. When you hear the sirens, you call it in, and you go. Don't wait for further instructions, get in the trucks and fall back. If you happen to be inside the fences, even if you're in the middle of a pursuit, drop it. Get back to the gates double-time. Don't bother slowing down, the entrances will be standing wide open by the time you get there.

I toggled the radio and sent a final message.

"Station four. We have sirens. All personnel evacuate."

I dropped the radio's handset and headed for the door, grabbing the truck's keys from their hook as I went. In a spray of gravel, I pulled away from the station and started north, putting the zone quickly behind me. Whatever it was we were monitoring for had clearly come to pass, and those trained to deal with it would already be on their way.

Sure enough, ten minutes later I passed a convoy of trucks headed the other way, each loaded with personnel in hazmat suits. The only vehicle that seemed out of place was one pickup in the middle of the line, driven by stone-faced man with graying hair, and carrying a single passenger, a determined looking woman in a black jumpsuit, her silvery hair pulled back in a tight ponytail. At first glance they looked like a middle-aged couple who stumbled into the middle of the group, but their truck was the usual Department of Defense green and sported government plates, so I could only assume they belonged with the rest of the group heading in to deal with the crisis. For a moment, I almost thought they looked familiar, from my research into the town. They looked a lot like the Chief's daughter, and that deputy, but I shook the idea off as a phantom of my mind currently running in overdrive.

At one point, I chanced a look back in the mirror, and saw thick black smoke rising from the center of the zone and assumed a fire was the reason for the sirens. At least, it looked like smoke as it rose above the trees. But then it stopped rising, seemed to gather for a moment and then sent out what looked like long, tentacled arms of thin dark clouds. I know it had to just be a trick of sunlight or something. Before I could look again, the road curved and I was back into the trees, and the smoke was hidden from sight. Whatever it was, I just have to trust the crews heading in know how to deal with it.

---

**This was one of those stories that came out of nowhere. I was taking a walk at lunch today and they were testing out a new set of emergency alert sirens at the port near my office, and this is**

the narrative my mind decide to put together as I listened to those long, droning notes.

As of now, I don't have any plans to take this story further, though I will keep an open mind if I come up with a continuation.